

Fourteen Department of Corrections employees were among more than 200 state government workers honored with Governors Awards for Excellence in Performance in September.

The 10 members of the Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility management team were cited for their efforts to have the Miles City program join the national Performance Based Standards (PbS) initiative sponsored by the Council of Juvenile Corrections Administrators.

This initiative requires uploading a great deal of data every six months, which is then compared to data from more than 100 youth correctional facilities around the country. During this first year, specific training has also been provided by a PbS coach and other national trainers to enhance staff skills specifically targeting interventions with youth and providing evidenced based programming.

The improvement in several key areas from the first six months data collection to the second six months has been significant and has greatly enhance the safety, security and effective programming at the facility.

The team members are Sandy Fogle, Jason Higgins, Jeff Holland, Teza Holland, Jodi Kirkwood, Brenda Kneeland, Jeff Lee, Steve Ray, Mark Schwarzkopf and Teri Young.

Cathy Gordon, who heads the interstate compact unit in the Community Corrections Division, was recognized for what her colleagues described as being the “can-do employee of corrections.”

Her nomination said, “Her knowledge and experience is an asset to the corrections field. Cathy over the years has covered a variety of positions throughout the department. She is a valuable selfless employee who is always willing to do what’s best for the department. Cathy is always willing to provide insight and knowledge wherever needed. She is driven to get the job done with efficiency, fairness and fiscal responsibility”

Sam Casey, reentry coordinator for the department, has been instrumental in championing the agency’s reentry initiative.

His dedication to the department, victims and offenders is evident every day as he works to educate state, private and local partners on the importance of the successful transition of offenders back to their communities,” his nomination said. “As the department’s reentry manager, Sam tirelessly works to build safer Montana communities and he creates a wave of enthusiasm that carries others along toward that goal.”

Ken McElroy, chief of the Human Resources Bureau, is a 25-year veteran in the field.

According to his nomination, “He is a consistent, reasonable and seasoned voice, guiding the management team and supervisors on difficult labor relations and sensitive personnel issues. Ken has developed a strong, competent and diverse HR staff through shared leadership, communication and commitment. His expertise is sought out both within the department and by HR supervisors and managers within state government.”

Karen Duncan, chief of the Youth Community Corrections Bureau, was among 12 member s of the Interagency Coordinating Council for State Prevention receiving a governor’s ward for their work.